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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 17 July 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to you today to convey that yesterday, Wednesday, 16 July 2014, tragically marked the highest number of child fatalities in a 24-hour period since Israel's barbaric aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip began 10 days ago. According to reports, the Israeli occupying forces killed 23 Palestinians yesterday, including 3 women and 9 children — 7 boys and 2 girls.

Among the dead were Ismail (age 9), Ahed (age 10), Mohammed (age 10) and Zakariya (age 10), brothers and cousins in the Baker family, who were murdered by the occupying forces, who fired at them as they were playing on the beach in Gaza City. The number of children killed by such Israeli war crimes in Gaza in the recent period now stands at 47. The killing of these young boys was witnessed by many journalists on the scene. One journalist, Peter Beaumont of *The Guardian*, who witnessed the attack, stated the following:

> The first projectile hit the sea wall of Gaza City's little harbour just after four o'clock. As the smoke from the explosion thinned, four figures could be seen running, ragged silhouettes, legs pumping furiously along the wall. Even from a distance of 200 metres, it was obvious that three of them were children.
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> Jumping off the harbour wall, they turned on to the beach, attempting to cross the short distance to the safety of the Al-Deira hotel, base for many of the journalists covering the Gaza conflict.
>
> They waved and shouted at the watching journalists as they passed a little collection of brightly coloured beach tents, used by bathers in peacetime.
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> It was there that the second shell hit the beach, those firing apparently adjusting their fire to target the fleeing survivors. As it exploded, journalists standing by the terrace wall shouted: "They are only children." In the space of

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40 seconds, four boys who had been playing hide-and-seek among the fishermen's shacks on the wall were dead.

In addition to the killing of the four boys, yesterday, another four Palestinians were killed when Israeli strikes targeted them near Al-Katiba mosque west of Khan Younis. A small girl, Yasmin Al-Astal (age 4), a boy, Osama Al-Astal (age 6) and Raqiyya Al-Astal (age 70) were among the dead, and many others were injured. In another war crime yesterday, a missile was fired from an Israeli drone at a civilian taxi in Bani Suheila, west of Khan Younis, killing several members of yet another Palestinian family. The family was on its way home from visiting a hospitalized family member who had been injured in an Israeli air strike days prior. Ibrahim Ramadan Abu Daqqa (age 10), his brother Amro Ramadan Abu Daqqa (age 25) and their sister Madeline Abu Daqqa (age 27), a pregnant mother of three, died along with their elderly grandmother, Khadra Abu Daqqa, all killed instantly by the wanton and deliberate attacks being perpetrated by the occupying Power.

In addition to the cold-blooded killing of these Palestinian civilians, many more have been killed and more than 1,700 have been injured by over 1,800 Israeli airstrikes thus far against the besieged Gaza Strip. Moreover, in the past 10 days, 695 homes have been completely destroyed, another 640 homes have been partially destroyed and 81 schools have been destroyed or damaged, along with three hospitals and five health centres; this is exacerbating the health crisis in Gaza, where there is a dire and growing need for medicine and medical equipment, already in short supply owing to the blockade. Religious sites also continue to be hit by Israeli airstrikes, including 3 mosques that have been completely destroyed and another 64 mosques that have been seriously damaged. Moreover, more than 22,600 people have been displaced and more than 900,000 people have been affected by the destruction of electricity, water and sanitation infrastructure.

In addition to the rampage of killing and destruction, the culture of Israeli incitement and hatred continues to intensify, deliberately aimed at terrorizing and causing harm to our people. Among the many examples of this are the condemnable actions by Israeli citizens in the town of Sderot, who have set up lounge chairs and couches on a hilltop to watch the bombs rain down on the Gaza Strip, eating popcorn while cheering the death of Palestinian women and children. Members of the Israeli Government also continue to incite and call for the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. In just one abhorrent example, Ayelet Shaked, a member of the "Jewish Home" party, issued a call on Facebook to ethnically cleanse the land, declaring that "the entire Palestinian people is the enemy". She advocated their complete destruction, "including its elderly and its women", adding that they must be slaughtered, otherwise they might give birth to more "little snakes".

Moreover, many Israelis continue to post hate-filled comments against Palestinians on social media outlets, inciting further violence and terror against our people. After yesterday's killing of four boys by the occupying Power, Israelis posted racist, vulgar rants all over social media, including, for example: "it's a shame it wasn't 400,000 dead kids", "have more of them killed like cockroaches, go away", and "I hope all of you die, stinking people, garbage Arabs." We condemn in the strongest terms such incitement, provocations and calls for violence against the Palestinian people. We call on the international community to strongly condemn all such forms of Israeli incitement, as well as the hate crimes that continue to be

perpetrated against Palestinian civilians, and to compel Israel to take action against perpetrators and bring them to justice.

While the Palestinian leadership welcomed the humanitarian ceasefire called for yesterday by the United Nations, more must be done to stop this aggression and alleviate the humanitarian hardships of the Palestinian people in Gaza. We express hope that ongoing efforts by all concerned parties, with whom President Mahmoud Abbas is actively engaged, will bring about a permanent ceasefire in order to avert the loss of more innocent human life. At the same time, we reiterate our urgent call to the Security Council to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and to undertake action to bring an end to this Israeli aggression and protect the Palestinian civilian population from Israel's crimes. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for all of its violations of international law and international humanitarian law. Moreover, the 8-year-old illegal Israeli blockade of Gaza must be lifted in order to end the socioeconomic deprivation of and humanitarian toll on our people. The international community, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, is also duty-bound to ensure compliance by the occupying Power. The history of the Palestinian people has already been marked by indescribable trauma, terror and loss, a result of Israel's 47-year-old occupation. It is high time for the international community to rectify this injustice by acting with urgency and conscience to bring an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of the occupying Power and allow them to achieve their rights and live as a free people in their own independent State.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 507 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 14 July 2014 (A/ES-10/640-S/2014/491) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations